

200 | THE SIGNET LIBRARY

The History of the Society of Writers to
HM Signet and the Signet Library

Extract from *The History of the Society of
Writers to His Majesty's Signet*
(Edinburgh 1936)

Introduction
(continuing the narrative from the 1890
History)

INTRODUCTION

THE Society of Writers to His Majesty's Signet took definite shape in 1594 under Sir Richard Cockburn of Clerkington, who was then secretary of James VI. ; but references to previous corporate acts, as well as the probabilities of the case, indicate that the transaction recognised and regulated, not always with complete success, a situation towards which things had long been moving. It was the result of developments during exactly a century and a half from 1444, when the keeper of the signet became a minister of state as royal secretary. Prior to this decisive association of the secretary and the signet, the seal itself had already been in existence for about a hundred years, beginning as a personal instrument of authentication and progressively acquiring official character. It is very likely that Robert I. employed the ring of his mother, the Countess of Carrick, for his son David II. probably wore and is known to have used the gem. Either David or his father had it engraved to show that it was the signet of the King of Scotland. By the time of James I. and the opening quarter of the fifteenth century the official character of the signet so far dominated the personal that the matrix had ceased to be a ring, and the clerk who kept it was growing in political importance.

The office of the secretary was affected in the latter half of the fifteenth century by the evolution of the Lords of Council and Session. The defects and abuses of the heritable jurisdictions induced resort to the crown by way of complaint, and the council, which used the signet in connection with the actions of the king, naturally tended to employ it where the crown intervened at the petition of a subject. At the sessions of council which had to be arranged for the administration of civil justice parties proceeded either by writ of summons out of chancery under the quarter seal, a development from the old and inelastic system of brieves, or by bill leading *ex deliberatione dominorum* to a citation under the signet

out of the secretary's office. Gradually the procedure by bill and deliverance prevailed, and in the reign of James IV. it became general. It was this which contributed most definitely to place the secretary's staff in their peculiar position as at once servants in the immediate affairs of the crown and licensed clerks serving the lieges in semi-private practice under a fixed tariff.

This stage, reached before the death of James IV. at Flodden, and already suggestive of corporate interests on the part of the writers to the signet, was accompanied or followed by a significant alteration in the management of the secretary's office. Differentiation in the royal council for the special ends of civil justice and the establishment of the lords of council and session as a recognised department of conciliar action had an inevitable consequence. What may be called the routine business of the signet could not be adjusted readily to demands upon the seal made by the king and his privy council. It became necessary to have more than one matrix. The secretary entrusted the seal or seals of routine to one of his clerks as keeper—farmed out the custody, perhaps, in anticipation of later usage—while he retained what came to be called the court signet under his more direct supervision. In the latter seal, though some of them wrote to it, the clerks of the signet were less keenly interested. Its use was a matter of constitutional controversy which did not affect their clerical activities.

When the lords of council and session were endowed under James V. in the form of the College of Justice the writers to the signet were comprehended. Though some of their work fell outwith the special sphere of the civil court, there was apparently no thought of selecting writers restricted to the business of the session signet. That all were included without regard to irrelevant occupations was due in no slight degree to the solidarity which their body had already attained. An experienced staff, associated intimately with the growth of the institution, and preserving a continuous tradition under changing secretaries, they had acquired the spirit of a guild and doubtless had something to say—the keeper especially—on qualifications for admission.

The office of keeper was treated as a permanency when William Maitland of Lethington became secretary, shortly before the Reforma-

tion. Neil Laing, who died in 1586, seems to have been in training before the reign of James v. ended. He and his relative Master John Laing had custody of the signet successively for more than half a century. It must have been during Neil Laing's tenure, lasting for over thirty years, that the controversies and difficulties arose which the transaction of 1594 attempted to solve. The secretary's right to appoint could not be denied, though his exercise of it might invite criticism. Apart from other ambitions, the very tangible immunities conferred by membership of the College of Justice were attractive, and the minister's patronage seems to have been obtained by some who did not find favour with the rest of his clerks. Many of the writers, on the other hand, now had their booths and places of business. Their apprentices and servitors aspired to mastership, for which they would certainly apply on the decease of an employer; and in the course of practice a writer might find it convenient to seek recognition for a useful or indispensable man. In these cases there was canvassing among the writers and no doubt representations to the keeper for support in an approach to the secretary.

This state of affairs is reflected in the early statutes of the Society. One result was the admission of persons for whom there was little scope and proportional temptation: another was informality in the preparation of writs and a lack of order to which James vi. himself seems to have adverted. In granting commission to the keeper and eighteen writers in 1594, Sir Richard Cockburn reserved his right to present, but conceded authority to frame statutes and conduct examination. It became the practice, on production of the secretary's letter, to name two examiners. A favourable verdict reported to the secretary procured a second writ instructing the keeper to seal the applicant's letters.

The renewal of commission by succeeding secretaries left the writers at apparent liberty to restrict membership, and requests by the minister of the time for dispensation in special cases were rare and apologetic. Yet the commissioners could never effect the limitation of numbers upon which repeatedly they resolved. The secretary had the initiative and—what was important—the right to an admission fee. He gave no express authority for the imposition by

the writers themselves of any financial obstacle to entry, and by the middle of the seventeenth century the Society had come to exact no more than a trifling sum.

Inquisition was none too strict, as we may infer from reports that one candidate was "of ressonabill knowlege," another "in sum reasonabill maner qualifeit." Neither contracting party was disposed to accept blame for the abuses which were periodically lamented. In 1609 the secretary regretted "the too haistye desire of many men to be maisteris," while the writers themselves, hinting that their superior was inclined to be prematurely gracious, decided in 1610 to demand an apprenticeship of seven years duly recorded in their books. In 1586 there had been thirty-eight men in practice; in 1594 limitation to about thirty was indicated as advisable: when the reign of James VI. ended more than twice that number were on the active list.

As years rolled on the Society expanded its membership. The peak was reached in 1836 and 1840 with 685 on the roll. In the year 1890 the contributors numbered 441. In 1914 the membership rose to 626, and at the time of writing it is slightly below 600.

The Society is a corporation recognised by the Court of Session, consisting of the Keeper of the Signet and all those holding commissions from him as Writers to His Majesty's Signet. The Society has no written constitution, but the Commissioners have power from time to time to make acts or statutes for the good of their calling. Until recently, the acts and regulations under which the affairs of the Society were conducted were framed in 1753 and amended in 1796: but at meetings of the Society and the Commissioners held on 9th April 1934, a new and modern set of Acts and Regulations was approved and now governs its procedure and affairs.

Since the History of the Society was published in 1890 there have been naturally many changes, not only in the personnel and administration but also in the law of the land. Longer delay might easily result in the loss of much that would be of abiding interest to the members and their friends, and so it appeared desirable to bring that history down to date. A committee was accordingly

appointed to do so, and the present volume is the outcome of their labours.

The volume is enhanced by an essay on the early history of the Scottish Signet by Professor R. K. Hannay, LL.D., His Majesty's Historiographer for Scotland, from which it will be seen that the claim of the Society to an antiquity of which it is justly proud has been abundantly vindicated. The committee is grateful to Professor Hannay for this contribution, which is a monument to the careful researches and the erudition of its gifted author.

By no means the least interesting part of this volume is the Abstract of the Minutes. The abstracting of these has been undertaken by Mr A. S. Blair and Mr William Roughead, and a perusal of these pages throws a sidelight on the mass of work dealt with by the Society.

THE LIST OF MEMBERS

In the prior volume there is given a list of the Writers to the Signet down to 1890. Of the members whose names are included only 78 are still with us, and since that date some 500 additional members have been admitted to the ranks of the Society. In the intervening forty-five years many further particulars have been gathered concerning the membership, and the entire list as it appeared in 1890 has been rewritten and is now published with the necessary additions to the conclusion of 1935. It includes all the known Writers to the Signet from the earliest times even before the Society took shape, because (as will be inferred from what is written above) it is a very difficult matter to say when the Society was actually formed. Many more interesting facts concerning members could have been given, but the exigencies of space forbade, and even the particulars that are given below make the new list very long and imposing.

Long it is, in all verity, but it could not be otherwise with a Society of such antiquity and connections as ours. There may be some who, perusing this list, see in it nothing but names and a bewildering array of dates. On the principle of the primrose by a river's brim, they will probably not change their opinion; but to a great many this catalogue of names and dates will be of

deep interest. Not only do we see how son followed father in the ranks of the profession, and how members often married the daughters of their masters ; but we pick up threads and echoes of authentic history of bygone centuries when we think for a moment of the times when these men lived with which we are directly connected through them. The imagination is at once stirred and the dry bones of history become clothed. We see the names of Sir John Reid and William Quereland. A moment's reflection and we recognise that these legal ancestors of ours had in all probability seen James II. and James III., the ill-fated monarch who fell at Sauchieburn. The gay figure of James IV. must have been known to Pittillo and Inchcok, and the fateful news of Flodden must have been heard by Walter Chapman, who then lived in a house at the top of Blackfriars' Wynd where, two hundred and forty years later, dwelt Primrose Campbell, the widow of Simon Lord Lovat, who lost his head on Tower Hill in 1747. Thomas Kene, John Donaldson and Thomas Maben wrote to the signet of James V., whose greatest legislative act was in the establishment in 1532 of the College of Justice, of which the Writers to the Signet form a part. Are Alexander Guthrie, Neil Laing and John Scott just names from that far-off past ? They must have seen the beauteous and unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots ; they were probably well acquainted with the bearded figure of John Knox in the streets of Edinburgh—maybe they "sat under" him. Harry Bickartoun and John Laing could have witnessed the departure of James VI. and his retinue from the capital of Scotland for the larger glories of the throne of England, and John Kincaid is certain to have discussed with his legal brethren the Acts by which Justices of the Peace were first appointed in Scotland, and a tariff of twelve pennies was imposed on every pound's worth of commodities imported into the country. In these days of internal peace we hardly realise how disturbed were the times in which our ancestors dwelt, as David Lawtie knew to his hurt, and one hundred and thirty-four years later, Archibald Houstoun, to the sorrow of his friends. Thomas Coutts died in 1627 but lived to see the new name of Charles in the Crown writs. Then came the days when Royalists and Covenanters were at loggerheads, and the members of the Society then living would have been more than

human if they had not espoused one cause or the other. That they were not "Papists" is plain from the Minute of 5th April 1697.

In these old days not less than now men dreamed of a short cut on the road to fortune. In 1696 William Paterson founded "The Company of Scotland trading to Africa and the Indies," better known as the Darien Company. It received Government sanction for a time; and in that time nineteen Writers to the Signet subscribed sums varying from £100 to £300. They lost their money. The Society itself seems to have voted £300, but it does not appear that the money was paid: which was just as well. Every lawyer in Edinburgh, even if not personally bitten (as many were), had clients whose dreams of El Dorado ended in ashes.

In those rougher times one could, and often did, lose money in other ways. It is on record that John Strachan of Craigcrook, the founder of the Craigcrook Mortification, had his Edinburgh house burgled and £1000 stolen from it by two men who obtained access to it after they had killed his maidservant with a hammer.

Those were fateful days in Edinburgh which followed on the historic Riding of the last Scots Parliament—a memorable and glittering sight as the procession rode from Holyrood up the Royal Mile. All Edinburgh turned out to see the riders and their running footmen, and in the crowd we can well believe that a certain lad there was Ludovick Brodie, destined to become a W.S. and to be the grandfather of the notorious Deacon. The Clerk to the Privy Council was Thomas Pringle, W.S., afterwards Deputy Keeper of the Signet. He would naturally be present, along with James Anderson, the Society's fiscal, and the possessor of a fine collection of Scottish books, the same who, "haveing wrote a book entitled 'An Historical Essay showing the Crown and Kingdom of Scotland is Imperial and Independent,' was rewarded by the Estates, on 10th August 1705, with a grant of £4800 (Scots) and received the thanks of the Scots Parliament at the same time as certain works to the contrary were declared scurrilous and ordered to be burned at the Mercat Cross."¹ The reign of Anne passed, but not without its own crop of troubles, as George Irving, W.S., Town Clerk of the City, well knew when he had to attend in London in connection with the

¹ Thomson's *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, ii. p. 221.

Porteous Riots. The rising of 1715 saw Charles Chalmers fighting at Sheriffmuir and that of 1745 saw Colquhoun Grant—that same keen Jacobite who rode up the Lawnmarket and buried his defiant dirk to the hilt in the Castle door—in the Prince's army at Culloden. The following year witnessed the attainder of John Hay of Restalrig, who had been treasurer, fiscal and substitute keeper. Every Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh at the time, whatever cause he espoused, must have seen “bonnie Prince Charlie,” if not of his own volition or from curiosity, at least when compelled thereto as escort of wife, daughter, or other female relation.

Outstanding among the various characters of local history—and not only local history—are the brave figures of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when Edinburgh enjoyed a reputation on which she is living yet. In fancy we can see, as numbers of those in our list actually saw, the sedan chairs, the Highland porters, the active caddies, the stage coaches, the bears in the perfumery shops; but above all we see the bewigged worthies of the day in braided coats, knee-breeches, and buckled shoes, crossing the High Street from Writers' Court to the Luckenbooths and exchanging pleasantries after the fashion of the day with their friends over their “meridian,” or taking their afternoon promenade in Hope Park where the youth and beauty and fashion of the city forgathered, or mingling in the crowded audiences at St Cecilia's Hall in Niddry Wynd when Urbani or Stabilini or Schetky was billed. Names in our list have brought the old days to life again. What did they talk about when exchanging the latest news at the coffee-houses and taverns?—a coach robbed by highwaymen on the road to London—a brawl in a close, the capture of Quebec, trials, suspensions, advocations, replies, duplies and a hundred other matters of small import now. The hearings before the Fifteen were solemn enough and the pleadings long enough, but the reaction was great and found its outlet in the convivial clubs of the day, in which many of our members, such as Walter Ross and Bain Whyt, found relaxation. There were the men who met Burns and Samuel Johnson; who knew Long Sandy Wood, and saw his huge gingham apparatus that was the first umbrella seen in Edinburgh, knew all the leading figures of the day, judges, professors, doctors, literati, and lawyers all exchanging wit and wisdom;

and those to whom the greatest perhaps of them all, Sir Walter Scott, was more than a name. With the memory of the discussions in our own time regarding the site of the Usher Hall, we can well imagine how our forbears-in-law were interested in the question of the site for Kemp's glorious monument to Scott—Charlotte Square or Princes Street.

One could prolong this line of thought, but the road being indicated, the reader must pursue it at his own pace. The names in the list have become human to us. It is a long list indeed, but necessarily so as it goes back to the fifteenth century and shows the continuous connection of our Society with the sovereigns of Scotland from those days to the present time.

The list, too, must appeal to us in another way, for as we turn the pages we see the names of many whom we knew personally and who have now gone from amongst us, and as their faces and figures rise before us, we recall their ways, their anecdotes and their high professional reputation and so keep their memories green.

The Committee is greatly indebted to the record kept by the late Mr Charles Cook, W.S., and to the invaluable records and researches of Sir Francis James Grant, K.C.V.O., W.S., for a mass of information and statistics which have been placed at its disposal and are included in the notes on the members.

HISTORICAL INCIDENTS

I. GENERAL

The general historical introduction to the History of the Society in 1890 ended on a note of loyalty when it recorded the presentation of an address to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, "on the completion of the Jubilee of her glorious reign." It is not unfitting, therefore, that the present historical account should start upon a similar note. This year (1935), the Society has again had the honour of presenting an address to the Monarch on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of His Majesty King George v. It was also represented by its office-bearers and others among the public bodies who attended before the Mercat Cross of Edinburgh on the occasions when King Edward VII. and, well-nigh ten years later, King George v. were proclaimed as

Sovereign.¹ On these occasions members wore their gowns. In olden days, members regularly wore their robes, and there are recorded cases, such as Habbakuk Bisset's, when members were suspended for failing to do so. The practice fell into desuetude, however, and it was only in 1901 that the question of gowns cropped up for the first time since 1746. A committee reported on the subject, and their minute is referred to on page 394. While the gowns presented in 1746 were to be of "Scots shaloon," those of 1901 were of silk.

The baton provided for the officer of the Society for use on state occasions, such as the levees of the Lord High Commissioner, and services in St Giles' Cathedral, was renovated with silver mounts and bands. In 1928 there was a further addition to the regalia of the Society in the form of a Chain of Office and Badge to be worn by the Deputy Keeper on special occasions. These were subscribed for by members of the Society and formally presented by the Keeper of the Signet, the Duke of Buccleuch, who invested the Deputy Keeper of the day, Sir William Campbell Johnston. This badge of office was first worn by the present Deputy Keeper, Mr Ernest MacLagan Wedderburn, when attending the levee of the College of Justice at Holyroodhouse, held by H.R.H. the Duke of Kent as Lord High Commissioner, on 22nd May 1935.

2. WAR SERVICE

In times of stress the members of the Society were never backward in proving their patriotism. Just as some took up the sword in 1745, so others, such as Bain Whyt, joined the volunteer force raised when the threat of a Napoleonic invasion loomed imminent. In the years 1898 to 1901 a number of members joined the colours and did their share of service in the South African War. A proposal was actually made at the time that the Society should form itself into a volunteer corps after the style of the "College of Justice Companie of Foot of 1679." It was estimated that such a corps would number at least 479 able-bodied men, but, perhaps fortunately for the enemy, it was not found necessary to put this scheme into practice.

In the Great War, 1914-1918, a large number of members and

¹ Also at the Proclamation of His Majesty King Edward VIII. on 23rd January 1936.

their apprentices answered the call to arms, and of these, 32 members and 10 apprentices laid down their lives. Many others did national work at the time. Reference to the war service of these members is included in the List of Members, but fuller particulars are given in the Roll of Honour which was published by the Society in 1920. A memorial, too, was erected in the west end of the lower Signet Hall, in honour of those who fell.

On 13th January 1921 this was unveiled by the Duke of Montrose in presence of a large gathering of members and friends. The memorial was designed to occupy the three bays of the west wall of the lower Library, and consists of three panels of warm statuary marble designed to fill appropriately the available wall spaces, the panel containing the dedication being centrally placed over the door, and the two side panels, suitably framed in Hopton Wood stone, over the marble mantelpieces on either side. These side panels contain, beneath a treatment of the "victor's laurel" carved in low relief, the names in incised lettering of the members and apprentices of the Society who are commemorated. It is fitting that their names should be mentioned here. They were the following :—

Members

ROBERT BALLANTYNE ANDERSON
 JAMES DONALDSON BOSWALL
 JOHN MACKENZIE BOW
 ALEXANDER BROOK
 ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL BROWN
 RICHARD MORRIS BURNS
 GEORGE MORTON CAIRNS
 ROBERT GILLIES CAMPBELL
 HARRY CHEYNE
 GEORGE DEAS COWAN
 WILLIAM HUGH ROBERTSON DURHAM
 JAMES GILBERT HAMILTON-GRIERSON
 WILLIAM LIDDLE
 JAMES BANNERMAN LORIMER
 DAVID CAMPBELL MAC EWEN
 WILLIAM ROBERT BENNY MCJANNET
 KENNETH MACKENZIE
 PETER JOHN STEWART MACPHAIL

ALEXANDER WILLIAM URQUHART MACRAE
JAMES DOUGLAS LEITCH MELROSE
JAMES THOMSON RANKIN MITCHELL D.S.O.
JAMES GRAHAM MYLNE
JOHN PROSSER JUN.
JAMES PHILIP PURVES
MATTHEW FREER RODGER
ANDREW HAMILTON SCOTT
CHARLES EDWARD STEWART M C
JOHN WALCOT STEWART M C
ALAN GRAHAM THOMSON
THOMAS TODRICK
JOHN DOUGLAS WATSON
ALEXANDER WHITE

Apprentices

WILLIAM SANDILANDS BROWN
WILLIAM DERMOT COOPER
ROWLAND FRASER
IAN GALLETTY
JOHN COLLIE KINMONT
JOHN MACKINTOSH
JOHN DONALD SHAW
JOHN FRAZER SMITH
JOHN JAMES ERSKINE BROWN STEWART
WILLIAM ALEXANDER YOUNG M C

The memorial is the work of Mr A. F. Balfour Paul, architect, who has succeeded most admirably in fitting the design into the wall of the building. A photograph of the memorial forms the frontispiece to this volume.

At that meeting, Sir George M. Paul, Deputy Keeper, told how the call was answered by members and apprentices and the tale of those who never came back. The Duke of Montrose paid fitting tribute to the dead and eulogised the noble response made by the Society to the call for men. The Rev. Dr Wallace Williamson having offered up a dedicatory prayer, the company sang the 66th paraphrase : " How bright these glorious spirits shine ! " Then followed a benediction and the wailing notes of " The Flowers of the Forest " floated into the hall, played by pipers, and " The Last Post " sounded by a bugler fitly closed the simple but impressive ceremony.

3. THE JOINT COMMITTEE

In the year 1922 a committee, known as the Joint Committee of Legal Societies in Scotland, was established, and held its first meeting on the 21st of December in that year. The first members of it were the W.S. Society, the S.S.C. Society, the Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow, and the Incorporated Society of Law Agents in Scotland, and in 1923 the Society of Advocates in Aberdeen and the Faculty of Procurators and Solicitors in Dundee were added. By the constitution of the Joint Committee, the Deputy Keeper of the Signet, if he is a member, is its chairman. The clerk to the W.S. Society is the secretary of the committee. The committee has proved its value by providing machinery for the joint consideration and discussion of matters of common interest to the legal profession. The members of the Society on this committee have been brought into close and friendly touch with the members of other societies, and this is all to the good of the profession as a whole.

Among the more important of the matters dealt with by the Joint Committee has been discipline within the ranks of the profession and the education and admission of solicitors. An attempt was made in 1925 to procure an Act providing for the establishment of a Discipline Committee, but this was unsuccessful. A more comprehensive measure was brought forward, with the approval of the six societies, in 1930, and ultimately reached the statute book as The Solicitors (Scotland) Act, 1933. This Act, in addition to setting up an independent Discipline Committee, entrusted the education of apprentices and their registration and enrolment to a new body called the General Council of Solicitors in Scotland. The Bill was sponsored by the Joint Committee, and in the course of its preparation suggestions were made that, in place of a general council consisting of representatives of existing societies, one large society embracing the whole profession should be formed. The view of the W.S. Society was that, while cordial co-operation among the societies was of the utmost advantage, the best interests of the profession would be served by retaining the individuality of the old societies, and this view prevailed. The Act appointed the Deputy Keeper of the Signet to fix the day, hour,

and place of the first meeting of the Council, and to preside thereat. The privilege of the W.S. Society to admit its own members and to conduct its own law examinations, was not affected by the passing of the Act.

The General Council met for the first time in March 1934, took up the duties imposed on it by the Act, and elected the Deputy Keeper of the Signet as its first chairman.

The Society has taken its full share in these movements which affect the profession as a whole.

4. THE COUNCIL

As to domestic management of the Society, it may be noted that in 1904, on the death of Dr Law, the librarian, it was decided that the librarian should no longer be an office-bearer. In 1925 it was decided that office-bearers should hold office for ten years or till attaining the age of 70, whichever should first occur. This decision is part of a movement to widen the number of members taking an interest in the affairs of the Society.

In the further desire of encouraging the younger members to take their share in the management of the Society's affairs, it was decided, with the approval of the Keeper of the Signet, to form a Council of the W.S. Society which should deal with everything which was not specially reserved to the Deputy Keeper, office-bearers and Commissioners. The Council first met in May 1934, and will be, it is hoped, of great benefit to the Society.

Since 1868 summonses continued to be signed on the last page by a Writer to the Signet before they could be signeted. This was always done as a matter of courtesy to other solicitors; but under the Administration of Justice (Scotland) Act of 1934, summonses can now be signed by any solicitor enrolled and practising in the Court of Session.

THE CHAIR OF CONVEYANCING

This important teaching post is fully dealt with, and its history is traced, in the History of the Society of 1890, to which reference can only be made here.

This Chair in the University of Edinburgh founded by the Society in 1816 has always been held by a Writer to the Signet. Since 1890 the holders of the office have been Professors James Stuart Fraser-Tytler, John Philp Wood, John Little Mounsey, and Ernest MacLagan Wedderburn. The last-named having become Deputy Keeper in 1935 resigned the Chair, and Mr Harry Henderson Monteath, W.S., was appointed Professor of Conveyancing in June of that year. In connection with this Chair the Society administers the John Robertson Prize Fund, for particulars of which *vide* page 403.

There is also in the University of Edinburgh a lectureship on the Law of Evidence and Procedure, which the Society along with the Faculty of Advocates and the Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts founded and helps to support. The present lecturer is Mr Hugh Wemyss Eaton, W.S.

THE LIBRARY

It may be useful to prefix to this continuation of the narrative of the Library a few dates taken from the 1890 History of the Society.

- 1722. Resolution of Society that Scots Law Books and Statutes be purchased.
- 1778. Resolution to form a general library.
- 1782-3. Flats above and below Signet Office in Writers Court purchased to form hall and library.
- 1805. Mr MacVey Napier appointed librarian.
- 1807. House adjoining Signet Office purchased.
- 1809. Society decide to participate in scheme for erection of buildings in immediate connection with Parliament House in order to obtain accommodation there.
- 1815. New buildings completed. Total cost to Society, £10,754, 13s. 10d.
- 1826. Upper hall purchased, price £12,000.
- 1833. Possession of upper hall obtained.
- 1837. Retiral of Mr MacVey Napier. Mr David Laing appointed librarian.
- 1878. Death of Dr Laing.
- 1879. Mr Thomas Graves Law appointed librarian.

1. LIBRARIANS

(a) Dr Thomas Graves Law

In 1890 Mr Law had acted as librarian for eleven years, and he continued to hold office until his death on 12th March 1904. In 1898 the University of Edinburgh conferred on him the Degree of Doctor of Laws "in recognition of his learned labours and indefatigable industry." The Reports of the Curators repeatedly express their appreciation of his work, and older members to-day will remember the high repute and esteem in which he was held. A Memoir written by Professor Hume Brown is prefixed to a volume of Dr Law's Collected Essays and Reviews published after his death, and a quotation from this may be made :—

"Mr Law's first care was for the noble library of which he was the chief custodier. In every respect he may be said to have been an ideal librarian. A natural courtesy and tact, cultivated by his special discipline made him the most pleasant official in all his relations. In the library itself there prevailed a harmony and order of which the visitor was conscious the moment he entered it. In the additions he made to the existing collection, which were largely left to his own discretion, he displayed the sure and wide judgment of one who has the trained faculty for discerning what was valuable and permanent in literature."

In a presentation made to Dr Law in 1903 by the Scottish History Society, of which society he was for seventeen years honorary secretary, Lord Rosebery, referring to the volumes issued by the Society under Dr Law's supervision, spoke of "the monumental contribution to the materials of Scottish History with which his name will ever be honourably associated." Dr Law was the writer of the article on the library in the History of the Society of 1890.

It is interesting to note that Dr Law's tenure of office along with that of his two predecessors, Mr MacVey Napier and Dr Laing, extended over a period just under a century. It would be difficult to over-estimate the good fortune of the Society in having successively three such notable librarians. It was a period when knowledge and flair in book purchases met with more numerous rewards than to-day when book price records are available to every one. Nor

should the foresight and liberality of the curators go unacknowledged. Although there is record of retrenchment in lean periods when the finances of the Society required it, in better times they spent money on books freely and courageously. Moreover, they constantly adhered to the policy of having regard primarily to the lasting worth and value of the additions made to the library.

During the years of the Great War, 1914-18, comparatively few books, apart from continuations of books already in the library, were purchased. With the return of peace the additions by purchase returned to normal.

(b) *Mr John Philip Edmond*

As successor to Dr Law the Society appointed as librarian Mr John Philip Edmond, then librarian to the Earl of Crawford, but with him the long continuity of service was broken, and he had little more than time to prove the wisdom of his selection when he died on 13th January 1906. During his short term of office, Mr Edmond gathered together and catalogued the fifteenth-century books in the library and carried out many improvements in administration. This catalogue was published by the Society in 1906, after Mr Edmond's death, having been prepared for the press by Mr Minto, who added appropriate indexes. A short account of Mr Edmond's life and of his contributions to bibliography will be found in "The Library Association Record," vol. viii., 1906.

(c) *Mr John Minto*

Mr John Minto, M.A., then chief librarian of the Public Library, Brighton, was appointed as successor to Mr Edmond and he entered on his duties in February 1906. As members of the Society are aware, Mr Minto, owing to ill-health, resigned office in January 1935, and died on 8th July of that year. A native of Aberdeen, Mr Minto had before his appointment to Brighton, held positions in Aberdeen and Perth. Amid the ever-increasing avalanche of published books, Mr Minto's task was not an easy one, but he steadfastly maintained the settled traditions of the library in regard to book selection and had due regard to the strengthening of

those subjects which form special features of the library. At the same time he carried out important improvements in indexing and classification which are referred to later. He also compiled numerous official and other publications, and was the author of "Reference Books—a Classified and Annotated Guide," 1929, Supplement, 1931, and "History of the Public Library Movement in Great Britain and Ireland," 1932. At the same time as Mr Minto there retired also the chief assistant in the library, Mr Alexander Mill, after over sixty years' service. He joined the library staff three years before the death of Dr Laing, of whom he has interesting recollections. At a meeting of the Scottish History Society in 1903, Dr Law referred to Mr Mill as "The Prince of Index Makers."

(d) *Dr Charles A. Malcolm*

Mr Charles A. Malcolm, M.A., Ph.D., librarian to the Society of Solicitors before the Supreme Courts of Scotland, has been elected librarian in room of Mr Minto, and Mr John Steven Robertson has been promoted to be chief assistant in place of Mr Mill.

2. ERECTION OF NEW WING TO LIBRARY

The necessity for increased accommodation for books is hinted at the close of the narrative of 1890. In 1888 additional storage for about 20,000 volumes had been obtained by the erection of new bookcases and shelving in the lower hall and adjoining rooms. This was adequate for a number of years, but the Society was wisely looking ahead. The ground to the west of the library belonged to the Commissioners of Supply of Midlothian, but was subject to certain rights of servitude in favour of the Faculty of Advocates and the Society. It was realised that if an agreement among all the parties interested could be reached, it might result in the parties obtaining an absolute right to certain portions which they could fully use. In 1890 the Society accordingly approached the Commissioners of Supply, but in view of impending changes in county administration the Commissioners were not then prepared to entertain such an arrangement. Further negotiations took place at intervals, and Mr Sydney Mitchell, architect, on the instructions of the Society pre-

pared a report with plans showing how the ground could be utilised to best advantage.

It was not until about ten years later, when the County Council determined to take down and rebuild the County Buildings, that the negotiations were successful. In 1901 the curators were able to report that a formal agreement between the curators, the County Council and the Faculty of Advocates had been completed. Under that arrangement the Society acquired the lower portion of the wing of the new County Council building, together with a strip of ten feet of ground between that building and the present library. This provided four floors of additional book storage now in use, the new building being connected with the old by a staircase on the strip of ground purchased, with openings into the library on each floor. The plans for the internal arrangement of the Society's portion of the new building and rearrangement of the accommodation in the library at the west end of the lower hall were prepared by Mr Sydney Mitchell.

In 1904 the Curators' Report stated that the additional accommodation was then being utilised. The total cost, including £2150 for the site and exterior walls, and £2583 for internal work and fittings, amounted in all to about £6000. The new wing of four floors was fitted with shelving to the extent of 12,400 feet, sufficient to accommodate over 75,000 volumes.

This is the only structural addition made to the library during those years, but various internal improvements and renewals have been made. Scientific advances have not left the Society unmoved. It is curious to be reminded that in 1896 there was a proposal "to light the upper hall by electricity," which was rejected with the remark that "the work of the library had been carried on quite efficiently since the lower hall was acquired in 1812 and the upper hall in 1833 without even the assistance of gas, or indeed any artificial light." Seven years later the architect reported that "it appears that the charwomen use lamps and candles in the dark mornings. . . . a dangerous practice." So the Society yielded, and electricity was introduced. The building throughout is now centrally heated, and from time to time the decoration has been renewed. In the present year the western entrance hall, staircase and also the

Commissioners' room, which is now also used for meetings of the Joint Committee of Legal Societies in Scotland and the General Council, have been redecorated.

3. COLLECTION OF PORTRAITS

In a Note to page lxxvii of the 1890 History, mention is made of some of the more important of the portraits and busts of members of the College of Justice and of the Society which had been acquired or presented and hang on the walls of the lobby and staircase leading to the Society's hall. In the intervening years additions have been made to these, and a catalogue of the collection has been made and will be found in Appendix I. at the end of this volume.

It contains examples of the portraiture of eminent Scottish artists, including Allan Ramsay, Sir Henry Raeburn, and Sir John Watson Gordon, from about the end of the seventeenth century.

One of the older portraits was presented a number of years ago as that of Lord Monboddo painted by William Aikman. As subject and painter were not contemporary the attribution was questioned, and it was also noticed that the robe was a civic one and not judicial. It has now been identified as a portrait of Lord Provost Drummond painted by Sir George Chalmers.

4. DONATIONS

The annual Reports of the Curators record that many important donations continue to be given to the library, both from members of the Society and the public.

Early in 1935, Dr James Watt presented to the library the only known perfect copy of "Ane Act and Ordinance relating to the Wrytters to the Signet, 1606."

The collection of Scott MSS. has received valuable additions. One of these is the MS. of "The Bride of Lammermoor," bequeathed by Mr Alexander Sholto Douglas, W.S. Another is a bequest by Miss Pringle Home Douglas of 11 bound volumes, including a collection of 65 letters from Scott to James Ballantyne, mainly about literary projects and the affairs of the firm of James Ballantyne & Co. There is also a volume containing the original MS. of Scott's prefatory

Memoirs of Goldsmith, Johnson, and Sterne. Another volume contains two important autograph letters of Sir Walter to a friend, and the remainder consist of press cuttings and autograph letters connected with the Ballantyne-Lockhart controversy and the private and ledger accounts of Scott and Ballantyne as James Ballantyne and Co. Mr Henry Hunter Meik, W.S., also gifted a number of interesting documents and autograph letters to the collection.

Another donation of MSS. consists of 16 volumes presented to the Society by Mr James Maxtone Graham of Cultoquoy and Redgorton. These include a folio volume formerly belonging to Archibald Johnston, Lord Wariston, including a fragment of Wariston's lost Diary (1539), and another folio volume containing documents relating to the affairs of Queen Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots.

Among numerous donations from Mr A. Francis Steuart, advocate, is a MS. collection in three volumes of upwards of 500 letters from Robert Boyd of Trochrig, 1578-1627, to Robert Boyd, Principal of the University of Glasgow, 1615-21.

The late Mr James Gilbert Hamilton Grierson, a member of the Society, who was killed in action, left the Society his valuable collection of 400 volumes of works in English literature mainly of the Elizabethan period.

Mr James Glen, writer, Glasgow, presented a collection of autograph letters of the first Viscount Melville.

Among the miscellaneous gifts is a unique collection of old Edinburgh Theatrical Playbills in 54 volumes bequeathed by the late Mr Alexander E. Burnett, W.S., and supplemented by a gift of 35 additional volumes by Sir Thomas Burnett, Bart., of Crathie Castle, Aberdeenshire.

Mr William Galbraith, W.S., also presented a rare collection of upwards of 150 coloured prints and engravings by Gilray, Rowlandson and other caricaturists of the Regency.

To the collection of Session Papers in the library after referred to, important donations were received from the Trustees of the late David Murray, LL.D., writer, Glasgow, of 225 volumes (eighteenth century), and from Messrs J. C. and A. Steuart, W.S., of 63 volumes (1820-62).

Mention must also be made of a legacy of £1000 bequeathed to the library by the late Mr Archibald Anderson, advocate, who was at one time the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer. -

5. USES OF THE LIBRARY

The position of the library as part of the Parliament House buildings and also its close proximity to the Cathedral Church of St Giles has led to its being associated with various events of a public and semi-public character. In 1911, on the inauguration of the Chapel of the Knights of the Thistle, both halls were in use for the assembling of the procession, and a stand was also erected in front of the building. The Knights of the Thistle continue to use the upper hall on the occasion of their annual assembly. In the same year when Holyroodhouse was not available the Lord High Commissioner held a levee for the College of Justice in the upper hall, and in the same afternoon a reception was held by the Deputy Keeper and office-bearers. In 1924, on the occasion of a visit of the American and Canadian Bar Associations, a reception was given when the whole Parliament House buildings were thrown open to guests.

6. CATALOGUING AND INDEXING

The Catalogue of Authors, vol. i., A-L, was printed and issued in 1871, vol. ii. (with Supplement to 1881) in 1882. A second Supplement from 1882-87 with a complete subject index was issued in 1891. Since 1888 Catalogues of the Additions to the Library have been printed at the end of each year, and the printed entries of the individual items are pasted into the folio volumes of the Catalogue of Authors. In addition, all books acquired since 1905 are entered in a Catalogue of Authors on cards which was begun in 1907.

Until January 1911, the subject index consisted of the volume already mentioned dealing with all works added to the library prior to 1890; a typed index in 2 volumes from 1890-1900; and a card index from 1901-6; and from 1906-11 an index on slips. Mr Minto adopted the plan of incorporating the various supplements into one index, founded on the subject index of the London Library, in order that it might be more readily kept up to date. The oppor-

tunity of this amalgamation was taken to enlarge the scope of the index by including the contents of composite works, periodicals, volumes of essays, publications and transactions of learned societies, none of which were dealt with previously. This index has been written up to the letter "F" and occupies 11 volumes. About a quarter of "G" has been marshalled and checked; the remainder of the index is in slip form and is kept up to date.

In 1907 a catalogue (in two quarto volumes) of the collection of pamphlets, dating from the seventeenth century and numbering 1043 volumes, was typed from slips which had been written by Mr Mill.

An index, in slip form, to portraits in books added to the library was commenced in 1907 and has been continued to date.

The indexing of the names of the parties in old Session Papers, 1713 to 1820 (731 volumes), is a most important work which was completed in 1917. A subject index planned by Mr Minto, which gives the date of the action with number of volume and case, was added in 1918, as also an index of Maps and Plans referred to in the Session Papers, prepared by Mr Mill. The indexing of those papers has led to their being consulted both by members of the Society and by research workers.

A complete set of the printed Session Papers reported in the Court of Session official series of Reports from 1 Shaw down to (1934) Session Cases in 954 volumes are bound in calf, more recently in strong buckram. These volumes, which are lent out for a week or more at a time, are freely borrowed.

The printed petitions to the Court of Session have been preserved and separately bound since 1846 (274 volumes). These were also roughly classified, but since 1918 they have been classified in detail in order to facilitate their use as forms and precedents with fully classified typed indexes of the subjects and names of the parties. The frequency with which these volumes are borrowed and consulted evidences the usefulness of the work.

In 1890 the number of volumes in the library was 82,000. At the close of 1934 they numbered approximately 146,000, which represents an annual average addition of nearly 1500 volumes. This is a creditable accomplishment for a private library, and with such a statement this addendum to the narrative of 1890 may close on a

confident note. But the library is something more than a private institution in respect that it has always afforded access to members of the public who wish to consult its contents. During the period under review, frequent advantage has been taken of such hospitality, and many acknowledgments have been received from those who have enjoyed it. The last fifty years have witnessed an unexampled increase in the number of books published, and also in the facilities offered to the public for their use and enjoyment. Nevertheless the opinion may be permitted that inquirers on special subjects will continue to find on the shelves of the Signet Library information which they may not readily obtain elsewhere.

CHARITABLE AND EDUCATIONAL TRUSTS

I. JOHN WATSON'S TRUST

Standing in its own beautiful grounds on the west side of Belford Road, Edinburgh, is the large and handsome building erected in 1828 which for 107 years was known as John Watson's Institution, and is now to be known as John Watson's School. John Watson, W.S., was Solicitor to the Post Office and Assistant Solicitor of Customs and Salt Duties. It is recorded of him that he was "a Writer to the Signet of eminence and considerable employment in his profession." Further evidence of this is found in the fact that seven years after his admission to the Society he was appointed Substitute Keeper. He lived in Gosford's Close, Lawnmarket, then quite a fashionable quarter, and at his country house near Liberton, and seems to have devoted a considerable part of his means to philanthropic purposes. He died on 5th November 1762, leaving a Deed of Settlement dated 2nd July 1759, under which the trustees were his cousin Andrew Fletcher of Milton (Lord Milton) and John Mackenzie of Delvine, W.S. After making certain provisions for his widow and others he directed his trustees to apply the residue of his estate to such pious and charitable uses within the city of Edinburgh as they should think proper. When Mrs Watson died in 1769 the residue amounted to about £4000. The trustees executed a Deed of Destination of the funds in their charge dated 13th August 1764, under which they devolved the management of the trust after their

own deaths on the Keeper, the Deputy Keeper and the Commissioners of the Writers of the Signet for the time being. No steps, however, were taken towards building a hospital in terms of this deed, but the fund was preserved and under the care of successive treasurers, Samuel Mitchelson, W.S., and Vans Hathorn, W.S., accumulated to a very handsome figure. The Keeper, Deputy Keeper, and Commissioners in 1822 applied to Parliament for a special Act to regulate the trust, and the Act 3 George IV. cap. 23 was passed in that year, under which the petitioners were authorised to build and endow "an hospital with all proper appendages for the maintenance and education therein of destitute children and bringing them up to be useful members of society and also for assisting in their outset in life such of them as may be thought to deserve and require such aid." Thus armed, the Society, by its officials and Commissioners, put in hand the work of building and endowing the school. The master mind in the management of the trust and the erection of the school was Vans Hathorn, under whose keeping the funds amounted to over £110,000. It is surely fitting that he should be commemorated in the portrait painted by Sir John Watson Gordon, P.R.S.A. (who in his day painted most of the leading men in Scotland) which hangs in the place of honour in the great hall of the school, and this dignified old gentleman of eighty-four with white hair (or is it a wig?) and lace ruffles seems quietly and beneficently to preside at all the gatherings held there.

The school has been successfully administered by the Deputy Keeper and Commissioners acting through a committee of twelve of their number, and while all the boys and girls who have been fed, clothed, and educated within its walls have benefited by their residence there at a crucial early period of their lives, many of them have risen to high positions attained through good work done which can be traced to the knowledge they acquired at the school. And it is pleasing to note that among all former pupils there has been and is a splendid spirit of *esprit de corps*, which found expression in the formation and maintenance of the John Watson Club.

An Act of Parliament was passed in 1928 which created a commission to consider Scottish Educational Endowments, and John Watson's Institution fell under its purview. At first the commission

was unsympathetic and proposed certain schemes which were not at all acceptable to the Society. The minutes of the Commissioners show how the Society nearly lost its school, and the long and keen struggle to retain it. That they did so, even in a slightly modified form, is largely due to the unremitting perseverance of Sir William Campbell Johnston, then Deputy Keeper, and Mr J. F. Fairweather, who ably represented the Society's interests. After much discussion with the Educational Endowments Commissioners and the Scottish Education Department, a Scheme was adjusted which received the Royal Assent on 21st February 1935, and under which the school will continue to be carried on as before with certain alterations. The Society, by the Keepers and Commissioners, still remains the governing body, and appoints a Board of Directors of whom eight are to be nominated by the governing body, four by the Corporation of Edinburgh from its Education Committee, one by the Merchant Company and one by the John Watson Club, women being eligible as directors equally with men. Power is also given to take in paying pupils.

It is hoped that under the new constitution and in co-operation with the new directors the school will continue its highly useful and century-old career. The former pupils have enthusiastically supported the action of the Society in fighting for the maintenance of the school in the face of official proposals of quite another sort.

2. THE DICK BEQUEST

Mr James Dick was a native of Forres, who died in 1828. Having made a fortune in the West Indies, he bequeathed a large sum of money for the maintenance and assistance of the country parochial schoolmasters in the Counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Moray. The original trustees were the Keeper, the Deputy Keeper, the Treasurer, and eight Commissioners of the Writers to the Signet. Under a Scheme framed by the Educational Endowments Commissioners of 1882, the governing body consisted of thirteen persons, eight of whom were elected by the Commissioners of the Signet. The income of the trust funds was apportioned among schoolmasters of the landward parishes in the three counties named according to rules drawn up by the

The Craigcrook trustees were enjoined by their Act of Parliament above mentioned, *inter alia*, to pay to the W.S. Society the sum of £5, 11s. 1d. annually, being the equivalent of a sum of one hundred merks Scots directed by the Deed of Foundation to be allowed yearly to the poor of the Society. At a meeting of the curators of the library and committee on funds held on 14th October 1931, it was arranged that this annual payment should be passed on to the trustees of the H. H. Macbean Memorial Fund, and since then this has been done.

5. HARRY H. MACBEAN, W.S., MEMORIAL FUND

A sum of £2000 was made over in 1923 by Mrs Macbean, the widow of Mr Harry Havelock Macbean, W.S., to the Deputy Keeper of the Signet and the office-bearers of the W.S. Society as a memorial fund in memory of her late husband. In terms of the Deed of Trust, dated 1st March 1923, granted by Mrs Macbean and the Deputy Keeper and office-bearers, the income of the fund is to be applied for professional men in good social standing who are Protestants, of good personal character, in necessitous circumstances arising from or due to misfortune or ill-health. The managers of the fund are the Deputy Keeper and the office-bearers of the Society, and they are directed to give preference to members of the Society in the application of the income.

6. MISS MARY MURRAY'S INSTITUTION

Miss Mary Murray of Dysart left a sum of £3400 which under her Trust Settlement became vested in the Keeper, the Deputy Keeper, and the Commissioners of the Signet as trustees for the establishment of a hospital for the education of girls of respectable poor parentage to be domestic servants. This institution has also come under the purview of the Educational Endowments Commissioners. The Home was duly established and carried on its good work in terms of its trust, being managed entirely by the Deputy Keeper and six members of the W.S. Society, with a clerk. For the last fifty-three years it has been situated at Prestonpans, where it has given a happy home and education to a number of girls. It will in future be part

of a larger scheme (which has almost been adjusted by the Commissioners), to be known as The Lothian Homes Trust Scheme, with county and other representatives on the governing body, but the Writers to the Signet will still be represented, and it is probable that the Scheme will work out as a Home for Children near Haddington, and a Home or Homes for older girls completing their education and training in Edinburgh. At present there are thirty-four girls in residence with a staff of five—a matron, a teacher and three instructresses in different branches of domestic management, and the daughters of a well-known W.S. command successful companies of Girl Guides and Brownies with very helpful results.

7. JOHNSTONE CHRISTIE WRIGHT FUND

Mr Johnstone Christie Wright, sometime of Northfield, Colinton, who died in 1935, by his testamentary writings provided that the residue of his estate should be utilised in the endowment of a new and permanent charity for the benefit of women of Scottish parentage, preferably connected with Edinburgh, of the status of the professional class. Mr Wright's testamentary trustees are instructed to form a scheme for the permanent administration of the Fund, which the testator desired should be managed by representatives of the Faculty of Advocates, the W.S. Society, and S.S.C. Society.

8. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

The Society continues to send a representative to sit on the governing body of Fettes College, under the Scheme drawn up by the Educational Endowments Commissioners of 1882, and a representative to sit on the Board of Managers of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, under the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary Act of 1870. The present representatives on these boards are, respectively, Sir William Campbell Johnston and Mr Kenneth M. Oliphant. The Society is also represented by Mr Archibald Blair on the Board of Management of Merchiston Castle School.

The late Mr George F. Melville, advocate, by his testamentary writings appointed as his trustees, the Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, the Keeper of the Signet, and the Master of the Merchant Company. After certain annuities, the estate is to be held "for

the care and cure of cancer.” Difficulties in the way of administration arose and an Act of Parliament was obtained, under which the trustees appointed are the Vice-Dean of Faculty, the Deputy Keeper of the Signet, and a nominee of the Master of the Merchant Company. A fourth trustee has been assumed. The Deputy Keeper accordingly is, *ex officio*, one of the Melville Estates Trustees.

The trustees of the deceased Misses Barbara and Mary Walker of Coates, incorporated by the Walker Trust Act, 1877, are :—

The Right Reverend the Bishop of Edinburgh.

The Very Reverend the Dean of Edinburgh.

The Right Hon. the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh.

The Dean of the Faculty of Advocates.

The Deputy Keeper of His Majesty's Signet in Scotland ; and

The Treasurer of the Bank of Scotland.

In terms of this trust the Episcopal Church of Scotland are the residuary legatees and the free annual income is applied for the maintenance and support of the Episcopal Church in Scotland and is allocated annually by the trustees.

THE WIDOWS' FUND

For the earlier history of the Widows' Fund reference is made to the chapter on it in the introduction to the History of 1890.

The Act 1 and 2 William IV. cap. 5, as amended by the Act 6 William IV. cap. 22 and the Act 61 Vict. cap. 2, now regulates the affairs of the Fund under the direction of the trustees, who are the Deputy Keeper of the Signet for the time *ex officio* and six members of the Society elected by the contributors, assisted by the Collector, who has hitherto always been a member of the Society, and who is annually elected by the contributors. The office of trustee is honorary. The Collector is the only salaried official, he having the practical management of the Fund, including the collection of its income and the payment of the annuities to the widows of deceased contributors. The present Collector is Mr Andrew Gray Muir.

The election of the Collector is annual, and although the Fund has now been in existence for 131 years, there have only been eight collectors, a note of whose names appears on page 385.

The accumulated fund at Whitsunday 1935 amounted to £851,640, a figure never before reached.

The annual contribution payable by contributors is £6, 6s., while the annuities payable to widows of contributors is at present fixed at £114 per annum. At Whitsunday 1935 there were 557 contributors and 155 widows.

The affairs of the Fund are periodically investigated at intervals of seven years, in terms of Sections 33 and 34 of the Act 1 and 2 William IV. cap. 5, and the results of these investigations are duly reported to the contributors by the trustees, who conduct the inquiry with the assistance of an actuary. The rate of annuity to be paid to widows of contributors for the ensuing period of seven years is raised or reduced as the investigation shows to be expedient. The amount of the annuity has thus varied considerably since the commencement of the Fund. It began at £50, in 1887 it was £80. From 1887 to 1907 the annuity was continued at the rate of £80 per annum. It was increased to £84 per annum from 1908 to 1914, and again increased to £90 per annum from 1915 to 1921. In 1922 it was once more increased to £96 until the year 1928, and in 1929 to £114. In 1936 it was still further increased to £125 per annum.

In addition to those noted in the introduction to the History of 1890, the following septennial investigations have taken place since 1886, *videlicet* :—

In 1893, by David Deuchar, F.F.A., F.I.A., F.R.S.E.

In 1900, by David Deuchar, F.F.A., F.I.A., F.R.S.E.

In 1907, by Archibald Hewat, F.F.A., F.I.A.

In 1914, by Gordon Douglas, F.F.A., F.I.A.

In 1921, by Alfred Ernest Sprague, M.A., D.Sc., P.P.F.F.A., F.I.A.

In 1928, by Alexander Graham Donald, M.A., F.R.S.E., F.F.A.

In 1935, by Alexander Graham Donald, M.A., F.R.S.E., F.F.A.

In the volume referred to there was printed a State which showed some particulars of the progress of the Widows' Fund from Martinmas 1803 to Whitsunday 1890. The following table continues the story to Whitsunday 1934.

STATE SHOWING SOME PARTICULARS AS TO THE PROGRESS OF
THE WIDOWS' FUND FROM MARTINMAS 1890.

Year.	Contri- butors.	Annui- tants.	Annuity.	Fund.	Increase.	Decrease.	Rate of Interest on Heritable Securities.	
							Whit- sunday.	Martin- mas.
1891	452	136	£80	£234,359	£1,575		3½	3½
1892	461	127	80	236,304	1,945		3½	3½
1893	472	122	80	240,269	3,964		3½	3½
1894	486	121	80	243,841	3,571		3½	3½
1895	485	119	80	245,878	2,037		3½	3½
1896	490	118	80	250,085	4,206		3½	3½
1897	500	116	80	253,846	3,760		3¼	3¼
1898	504	111	80	258,096	4,250		3¼	3¼
1899	520	104	80	262,232	4,135		3	3
1900	525	103	80	266,576	4,343		3	3
1901	530	102	80	272,429	5,853		3	3
1902	531	104	80	277,470	5,040		3¼	3¼
1903	534	102	80	284,937	7,467		3¼	3¼
1904	547	100	80	290,091	5,154		3¼	3¼
1905	561	102	80	298,449	8,358		3¼	3¼
1906	568	99	80	306,163	7,713		3¼	3¼
1907	573	101	80	311,858	5,695		3¼	3¼
1908	583	105	84	320,463	8,605		3½	3½
1909	593	104	84	329,027	8,563		3½	3½
1910	598	99	84	336,331	7,304		3½	3½
1911	606	95	84	344,366	8,034		3½	3½
1912	615	100	84	353,391	9,025		3¾	3¾
1913	627	96	84	360,212	6,821		3¾	3¾
1914	631	98	84	370,710	10,497		3¾	4
1915	630	94	90	376,061	5,351		4	4
1916	614	103	90	372,938		3,123	4½	4½
1917	602	107	90	379,974	7,035		4½	4½
1918	581	113	90	391,742	11,767		5	5
1919	566	113	90	407,208	15,466		5	5
1920	567	115	90	410,083	2,874		5½	5½
1921	563	114	90	426,668	16,585		5½	5½
1922	564	116	96	486,091	59,423		5½	5½
1923	562	116	96	508,863	22,772		5	5
1924	559	116	96	515,569	6,706		4¾	4¾
1925	559	121	96	529,846	14,276		4¾	4¾
1926	559	120	96	540,488	10,642		4¾	4¾
1927	556	125	96	562,610	22,121		4¾	4¾
1928	557	130	96	587,292	24,682		4¾	4¾
1929	551	139	114	597,807	10,514		4¾	5
1930	550	140	114	613,094	15,287		5	5
1931	544	150	114	651,796	38,701		5	5
1932	551	151	114	695,933	44,137		5	4½
1933	558	149	114	765,364	69,431		4	4
1934	558	148	114	812,010	46,645		4	3¾
1935	557	155	114	851,640	39,629		3½	3½

THE FINANCES OF THE SOCIETY

It is fitting that this introduction should close with a reference to the finances of the Society. Under the guidance of its last two Treasurers, the late Mr John Cowan and Mr James Watt, LL.D., who succeeded him in 1925, the funds have continued to prosper. On 31st December 1889 the free funds amounted to £44,886; at 31st December 1934 they were £67,709. In this last year the income derived from dividends and interest was £1861, 0s. 1d., while the receipts from dues of intrants and apprentices was £3937, 3s., together £5798, 3s. 1d. Against this the expenditure was £5133, 14s., showing a surplus of £664, 9s. 1d. This apparent surplus arose because the sum received for dues was considerably above the average. As no annual payment is exacted from the members, the accumulated funds are needed as a reserve for future expenses of the Society and the library in respect of those who are already members.